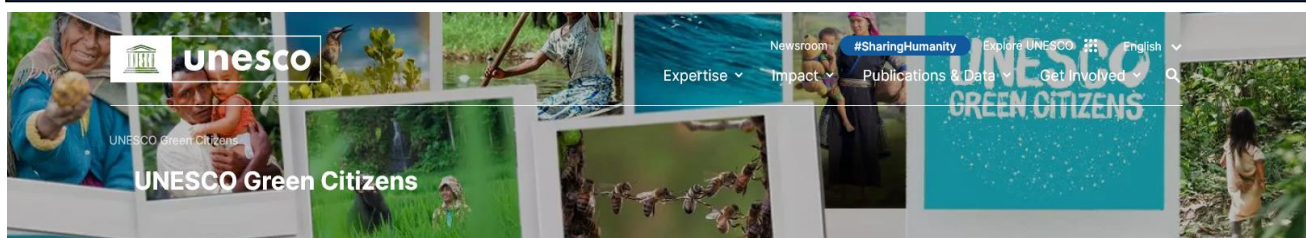


UNESCO GREEN CITIZENS

A GLOBAL VOICE FOR LOCAL ACTORS OF CHANGE



October 2025

Since 2015 UNESCO continues implementing the [Green Citizens Initiative, a global voice for local actors of change](#), to support and highlight citizen projects that shape new ways of inhabiting the world, in harmony with nature.

In 2025 [UNESCO has identified 157 local initiatives across 65 countries](#) which are citizen driven, innovative, impactful, and replicable solutions across five key themes for the fight against global warming and to preserve the environment: Biodiversity, Ocean, Education for Sustainable, Indigenous and Local Development.

UNESCO champions inspiring citizens from all around the world, with concrete and innovative local solutions to global challenges that have been scientifically identified by the Organization. UNESCO Green Citizens offers opportunities for partnerships and spreads best practices, innovations, and ideas. By putting the local actors of change in the spotlight, UNESCO hopes to create a chain reaction to ensure a better future for a greener planet.

The initiative enables people to reach out to projects' teams and propose voluntary actions, bringing closer those who are willing to act with those who are already doing. Somebody embark on projects, remotely or on site, others travel from project to project to discover the force of committed local people, and gain trust into our collective ability to drive change.

UNESCO Green Citizens is the bridge between UNESCO's scientific expertise, local citizen solutions and young people's willingness to act against climate change.

The website of the Initiative offers the interested partners the way to get involved with different projects of interest of the UNESCO Green Citizens. For each project there are [23 expressed needs to which interested people can answer according to their skills](#): Communication strategy design, Crowdfunding, Digital Communication, Equipment Supply, Financial Management, Financial Reporting, Graphic Design, In Search of Financial Partners, Legal, Logistical Support, Monitoring and Evaluation, Partnerships Development, Press Relations, Project Management, Research, Social Media, Sponsorship/Philanthropy, Strategy/Advocacy, Technical Support, Training, Translation Services, Volunteer Workforce,



Web Design. Once the potential partners have chosen a project of interest, they can propose to offer their help according to their skills and the project needs.

One of the last initiatives promoted in 2025 by Green Citizens UNESCO is the [Lesvos Mission Blue Hope Spot](#) launched in 2017 in the Aegean Sea, in Greece, to address environmental challenges through marine conservation, education, youth engagement, industry and community action. The [Lesvos Mission Blue Hope Spot tackles the alarming decline of marine biodiversity in the Aegean Sea](#), primarily caused by plastic pollution, ghost fishing nets, habitat degradation, and the lack of marine conservation management system. The local coastal and marine ecosystems are home to a variety of species listed on the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#), such as the *Posidonia oceanica* meadows, which were being severely impacted by these threats.

By adopting an holistic approach, the initiative engages local and international stakeholders through three key projects:

- The Blue Heart Project which involves local and international youth in hands-on marine restoration, through beach cleanups and environmental education.
- The EU Blue School Project which fosters and rewards the integration of marine conservation into local school curriculums, ensuring long-term impact and behavioral change.
- The GhostNet Free Ocean Project which collaborates directly with local fishers to track and remove lost fishing gear through mobile applications that allow them to report them. It addresses this persistent issue while promoting responsible fishing practices.

By actively involving fishers and students in marine conservation efforts, the project fosters lasting social and educational benefits, empowers local communities, and cultivates a deep-rooted culture of environmental stewardship. Additionally, marine debris collected during cleanups is repurposed into educational tools, art pieces, or eco-friendly products, shifting community perspectives toward a circular economy approach.

The Green Citizens website invite all actors interested to get involved in this initiative, to establish direct contacts with the [Healing Lesvos not-for-profit organization who manage the project in Greece](#).

Another initiative promoted in 2025 by the Green Citizens Project is the [Anak Pulau Programme, realized as community-led effort in Malaysia's Perhentian Islands](#) that guides local youth into marine conservation through age-specific activities.

The Perhentian Islands marine ecosystems were subject to several human-caused pressures, the main one being the rapid expansion of the tourism industry. Over the years, increasing reports of ghost fishing nets, crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks, and discoveries of dead turtles testified to the urgency of the situation. Although the islands were declared a marine park in 1994 and the relevant authorities were informed, their ability to respond was often limited by budget and manpower constraints. In addition, local villagers were not involved in the management of the marine park, which limited community engagement in marine conservation efforts. Seeing the need for local action, the Anak Pulau Programme set up a Rapid Response Team, empowering trained islanders to help protect the marine environment.



By providing continuous support from childhood to young adulthood, the project is building a homegrown team of empowered ocean stewards — uniquely tailored for island life and deeply connected to their marine heritage.

What began as a small school club has grown into a thriving community of passionate conservationists. At the end of 2024, the Rapid Response Team was composed of 31 trained community divers and 13 trained reef check eco-divers. In 2024, they conducted a reef check survey, a marine biodiversity survey and a bleaching monitoring for the marine park. Many of the earliest members have returned as mentors, continuing the virtuous cycle of island stewardship for future generations. Over the next years, the initiative hopes to reach at least 40 members from the village actively involved.

Anak Pulau is the first programme of its kind in Malaysia and serves as a replicable model for community-based conservation in other islands and coastal regions.

The Green Citizens website invite all actors interested to get involved in this initiative, to establish direct contacts with [Fuze Ecoteer Outdoor Adventures Sdn Bhd](#), the leading organization managing the programme.

Launched in 2015 as part of its commitment to [Biodiversity](#), [Education for Sustainable Development](#), [Hydrology](#), [Indigenous and Local Knowledge](#), and [Ocean](#), UNESCO's Green Citizens has become, with its 157 identified projects in 65 countries, an initiative capable of offering a broad platform for exchanges that allows different stakeholders to be involved in projects aimed at green and sustainable development.

To know more

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